

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Can We Enjoy Life and Still be a Faithful Servant? Newsletter Theme: Miscellaneous Topics

God's lovingkindness has given us all things to enjoy (*Ecc. 5:18-19*)! Yet, we're also encouraged to grow and know who we are in Christ, our purpose on earth, and how to stay focused above. Actually, our body is to be a living sacrifice unto God (*Rom. 12:1*). We're to run 'the race of life' to attain the prize: "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? so run, that ye may obtain.*" (*I Cor. 9:24*). This relates to growing, but also obtaining rewards for labor we do, working with God as His ambassador (*I Cor. 3:14*).

The inward desire to enjoy life is strong (*Gal. 5:17*), yet the Lord Jesus' blood sacrifice redeemed us and we are not our own: "*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*" (*I Cor. 6:20*). So, how can we allow our Lord Jesus Christ to live through us and still enjoy life?

While Scripture teaches that we are under grace and free to live as we choose, love constrains us to yield to do ministry and serve our Father. (*II Cor 5:14*). It can be a battle between our flesh and the Spirit (*Gal. 5:17*). God left us here on His behalf to help others grow, and further their joy: "*And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith.*" (*Phil. 1:25*)

When we dwell on sound doctrine, it enables us to bring into captivity our thoughts to the obedience of Christ (*II Cor. 10:5*). Thankfulness increases for all the Lord has done and we begin to see life differently. Serving God doesn't have to be drudgery or an all or none approach. We can learn to joy in our new life in Christ.

Actually, the weighty burden of feeling we 'have to' serve God all day can create a fear, which puts us under the law. It inhibits us from living unto God, even feeling guilty when we enjoy life. This fear is similar to what the Corinthians faced, wanting to take pleasure in carnal things, while avoiding the challenges of being a faithful servant. Instead, they gave themselves over to their lusts, not serving God at all, degrading into things not even named among the Gentiles (*I Cor. 5:1*).

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Reflections: Why So Much Focus on Romans

A few saints wondered why we have spent so much time in 'Just a Minute,' studying Romans. Two key reasons are listed below:

1) To provide a firm understanding of the foundation of the gospel of Christ: Romans is the first book of a series of books written by Paul to the Church, the Body of Christ. His epistles are laid out in the perfect order for our edification. This first book provides the essential foundation, onto which all others are based. Thus, it is imperative to get a thorough understanding and application of this key material. It helps the reader to gain the basics to obtain the mind of Christ (*I Cor. 2:16*). Paul knew the best way for saints to learn, "*...until Christ be formed in you...*" (*Gal. 4:19*) Romans (as all of Paul's epistles) is laid forth progressively as a curriculum to mature us. Basic components:

Justification (Romans 1-5)

Sanctification (Romans 6-8)

How we fit into God's plan (Romans 9-11)

New form of worship/service (Rom. 12-16)

2) To help others see the application of the Truth, written to the Body of Christ, revealed to us in layers, over time: God's Word can't be attained in one review. It is His deep, eternal wisdom, having complexities that need time to be digested/applied over time. Therefore, after writing general articles about each chapter, we decided to go through it a second time to address practical application issues to help readers see its relevance to their lives. The first time reading through a book, many get a surface, intellectual understanding. The next few times through, more detail is acquired, which refines or fills in understanding, and can provide insight to apply to life details.

What is next? 'Just A Minute' plans to address how to apply teachings from I Corinthians. To prepare, read through the book on your own, led by the Spirit, to see what God the Spirit reveals to you.

Choose Something to Study in This Section

Search it out!

Do We Really Need to Know Study Skills?

Examine verses!

There are a multitude of 'study skills' that are taught by God within the Bible. They enable students to glean what He has placed there for us. Many are listed in "Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools," which can be purchased on Amazon. A few examples:

1. Looking back-Study skill #16: Read *Romans 1* to observe how many times Paul refers us back in Scripture. He may make mention of a prior Scripture, refer to a promise or event that happened in the past, or even mention a person from the Old Testament. For example, in verse 5, do you know when Paul received 'grace

and apostleship?' (*Acts 9*) Also, notice verse 25. When did man first worship the creature instead of God? (*Gen. 3*)

2. Goal of a book-Study skill #8: The goal of Paul's epistles can be found in the first chapter, often in a prayer. Read through *Romans 1* to locate the goal.

3. Application of Scripture-Study skill #1: Once you understand what a verse says, reread it to think about how it can apply in your life. For example, *Romans 6:1-2*: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid..." Do I really know what sin is and am I continuing in sin as a believer? Pray and meditate on the passage to make needed changes.

Can We Enjoy Life and Still be a Faithful Servant? Continued from p.1

This fleshly thinking approach focuses on behavior, concentrating on the potential loss or how much change is needed. This will lead to pressure and anxiety, putting ourselves under the law. Our imagination sets us up to be immobilized by fear and failure. Candidly, the fear of losing the fun of life as we serve God is a stronghold and needs to be taken down. *"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* (*II Cor. 10:4-5*) Only by the Word dwelling within, can we lead our thoughts captive to learn a new joy, that is, working with our Father. When analyzed, the fear wall is a set of lies we tell ourselves and vain imaginations. These magnify our fears and potential problems, derauling us and preventing us from experiencing joy in our glorious life in Christ.

God's instruction to us is to renew our mind and replace law thinking with ongoing meditation on who we are in Christ and 'the mighty weapons of our warfare.' Then, the problem is no longer exalted, instead God and His power is elevated. **Focus on one decision and moment at a time, while yielding and doing God's work in love.** Avoid walking by sight and instead, redeem the time (*Rom. 13*), walking through the 'fear wall' (barrier) by faith. Continue progressing forward and before you know it you are on the other side of the fear wall, looking back. In most cases, it wasn't really as hard as you thought it would be and actually encourages growth (*Romans 5:3-5*).

The answer seems to be understanding and growing in grace, thinking and responding with the mind of Christ. Saints aren't 'required' to give up all things they like to live godly; this is legalism. Instead over time, God changes and matures us to live unto Him. We are to dwell on the Word (*Rom. 8:10-13*) and walk by faith to do what God instructs. Then we can reflect and adjust as we grow. Our desires will be transformed, gradually joying to do things for Him, delighting in ministry and being an ambassador. Christ becomes exalted in our thinking and we actually give up nothing. What we enjoy is replaced. Serving ourselves diminishes when the Spirit leads and conforms us to His image. Thankfulness increases, so we choose to lay aside fleshly issues to walk by faith to please our Father (*Romans 6*).

Reflect: Make the choice to see your fears differently; don't let them lead. It's an opportunity for the power of Christ to work in your inner man. This is a glory-producing opportunity. Trust God in you and take the challenge to run the race of life by faith! *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."* (*I Thess. 2:13*) As we do this in faith, glory is revealed and His power rests upon us. (*Romans 8:18*)

Grace During Trials and Tribulations

By Erin Alexander

This year has brought many concerns and uncertainties. How do we as believers keep our faith in what seems like a punishment from God? Scripture can explain. *Matthew 5:45* "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." What we are currently dealing with, may be new to us. However, mankind has suffered since the fall of Adam. Trying times are something everyone faces.

There is this idea that there are those who can miraculously heal. Faith healers have always been sought out. It only increases during a time like this. Pleading with God to be healed or have problems removed is not to be our focus (*Romans 5:3-5*). We can turn to our apostle Paul for the answer. *2 Corinthians 12: 8-9* "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Paul was suffering, and he asked God to help him. He called out to Him three times. God was showing Paul that He has already helped him. He gave all of us the greatest help we could ask for. His only Son was sent to take our place on the cross.

As believers, we are not excused from suffering in this world. What gets us through are not signs and wonders. We get through it by God's grace. *Romans 5:21* "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." *The Holy Spirit himself dwells in each and every one of us who know salvation. Trials and tribulations will come, "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."* (*II Timothy 3:13*), but we can rest easy knowing our position and eternal hope in Christ Jesus.



Reactions of fear, anxiety, and anger seems to permeate our society as we deal with the coming presidential election, COVID-19, riots, and the turmoil of this evil world. How we choose to respond is our responsibility. God provides all we need to negotiate even these troubled times. Will we be led by emotions or be wise? It's not easy to watch what's happening as we're impacted, while yielding to be an ambassador. Yet, we're to walk by faith, knowing our hope: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (*Titus 2:13*)

How are we to gain control over our emotions and thoughts? Focus and meditate on God and what He says, doing all things unto Him, not man: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him...Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (*Col. 3:17, 24-25*) Yield to God, believing.

How can we help others who are fearful and looking for answers: Love others with Christ's selfless love to teach them Truth. God will help them grow (*I Cor. 3:5-7*). Trust Him, not walking according to what we see around us. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (*II Cor. 4:18*) God's grace is sufficient! (*II Cor 12:9*)

How can we walk as a light to others, when many are not being very nice: We can trust God and walk confidently by faith, knowing He is the Avenger of all things (*Rom. 12:19*). When we do this, it frees us to serve even our enemies: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (*Romans 12:21*)

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To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

Follow After Peace and to Edify by Carol Fisher

Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Do we believe this is our experience? If we truly do, does our life show it?

We all have responsibilities that must be taken care of, in fact, these responsibilities are God’s will. If we’re married, God tells us to love our husband and provide an atmosphere that allows him to be the husband/father God tells him to be. We are to guide our children in righteousness and love. If we are not married, we need to be all about God’s ministry to others.

If we are alive unto God and His Word, the possibilities are endless. We are given the fruit of the Spirit and no matter the circumstances of our life, we can handle them joyfully, because we are one with Christ. Even our mistakes and wrong choices can be converted into new understanding and bring us closer to our Savior and our God. We sing, ‘Christ liveth in me,’ but do we really believe this in practice? Test it against God’s Word. These are not just words; they are the essence of our life here, in this time and place.

We can trust Christ, His faith, and His love for us. By His sacrifice at Calvary we are privileged to grow in His image. We are able to respond in faith for all He has done and is doing for us and in us. Christ’s life in us gives us true contentment, love, and fulfillment. His life in us should be the focus of all we are, and can be in Him. This is true holiness and fruitfulness. This also is abundant life.

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Periodical

Just A Minute: Monthly Grace newsletter providing Bible study, edification, and life application with sound doctrine.

Books (Available on Amazon)

- *What to Appreciate As We Approach God’s Word*
- *How the Bible is Practical & Able to Mature Believers*
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